



## Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA)

### Putting a price on downtime

#### INVITATION TO TENDER

##### Summary

1. This invitation to tender invites bidders to submit proposals to undertake a study to explore in detail what impact in financial terms of the loss of key IT services within UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The outcome of the project will be a toolkit detailing a series of formulae which will allow institutions to calculate the impact of losses outlined in a series of scenarios, taking into account the different missions of institutions within the higher education sector.
2. Funding of **up to £25,000** (including expenses but **excluding VAT**) is available for this study. The deadline for proposals is **17.00 on 18 September**. The work should commence week commencing 19 October 2009 and is expected to last for sixteen weeks. The final report will be due on 8 February 2010, with a draft final report submitted one week prior to this date for consideration and input by UCISA and its partners.

##### Background

3. The project is being led by UCISA and partnered by the British Universities Finance Directors Group (BUFDG) and the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA).
4. The Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA) is a membership association that represents the whole of higher education in the provision and development of academic, management and administrative information systems. UCISA's mission is to promote best practice amongst its membership and to inform and support policy making processes, at an international, national and institutional level. [www.ucisa.ac.uk](http://www.ucisa.ac.uk).
5. AHUA (the Association of Heads of University Administration) is the representative body for senior University managers (typically Registrars, Chief Operating Officers, Heads of Administration) in the UK and Ireland, who have responsibility for a range of managerial and legal issues within their institutions. AHUA has three main strands of activity: to facilitate an exchange of information amongst its members; to represent the collective views of members on key issues and policies to the higher education sector, government and other stakeholders; and to assist in the development of its members. [www.ahua.ac.uk](http://www.ahua.ac.uk).
6. BUFDG (the British Universities Finance Directors Group) is the representative body for Finance Directors in the UK higher education sector. BUFDG provide training and development for finance directors and their staff, provide a network of contacts for information exchange and provide a strategic financial perspective on higher education activities. [www.bufdg.ac.uk](http://www.bufdg.ac.uk).

## Terms of Reference

7. The move towards 24/7 operation and service delivery and increased dependency on IT to deliver all aspects of a higher education institution's (HEI) business has resulted in a significant investment in technological solutions to deliver increased systems resilience and business continuity. This investment has often been made without a full business case being established; this research is intended to look at a range of *loss of service* scenarios and assess the commercial impact of such losses in order to better inform decisions on systems resilience, continuity arrangements and insurance. Annex A details a number of example scenarios; the Project Board will look to meet with the successful contractor in the early stages of the project to agree and prioritise the scenarios to be used in the study. The contractor will be expected to deliver a minimum of eight and maximum of twelve scenarios.
8. The research will need to assess both the immediate impact and the cost of medium to long term effects such as the impact of loss of reputation on future student recruitment.
9. In addition to establishing formulae to calculate the cost of downtime, the project outputs should identify for each scenario any areas where the institution is at risk of failing to meet its regulatory or statutory requirements. Examples of such requirements include compliance with legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the need to prepare and submit accounts and other statutory returns (eg HESA). Where such costs can be easily identified for these risks they should be included as part of the calculation.
10. The outputs from the research will be a toolkit highlighting the impact of the given scenarios and formulae or templates for institutions to use to assess the financial cost of the outages outlined in the scenarios.
11. Efforts should be made to research across as wide a range of institutions as possible and across the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Bidders are required to outline the approach they plan to adopt to carry out the research and, in particular, how they plan to cover a range of institutions across the UK.
12. UCISA and its partners will assist with identifying and securing interviews with key people where required. UCISA, AHUA and BUFDG will also help raise the profile of the research through endorsement in supporting letters to interviewees, introductions etc.
13. UCISA, AHUA and BUFDG will help the successful contractor develop the discussion guides and materials for the interviews.

## Who we need

14. The successful contractor will a) specialise in conducting qualitative interviewing with senior level audiences, b) have a good understanding of the higher education sector, and awareness of the current economic climate both in the wider environment and within higher education, and c) be able to write succinct but insightful and informative reports for external audiences.

## Deliverables

15. The main output from the study should be a report to UCISA which will form the basis for a toolkit for dissemination to UCISA members. This report must contain an Executive Summary clearly outlining the immediate and longer term impacts on HEIs of the various scenarios, where possible drawing on real case examples. The report should contain formulae for use by institutions and be written succinctly and in a format that is presentable to an external audience. The successful contractors may be required to deliver a presentation on the report's findings to UCISA in London, and this should be factored into the project budget. The report should be delivered as a Microsoft Word file.
16. UCISA, AHUA and BUFDG will oversee the dissemination of the study and will make it available to the community as appropriate. It is envisaged that the report will form the basis of a short

briefing paper and the successful bidder will be expected to contribute to the development of this.

### **Intellectual Property**

17. The Intellectual Property Rights in the information provided in this study and the Intellectual Property Rights to all other outputs, will be the property of the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA).

### **Management of the Study**

18. The successful contractor will be required to meet with relevant UCISA staff and the Project Board in the early stages to discuss the requirements and approach, to agree the scenarios to be covered in the study and to ensure common understanding. Fortnightly progress reports will be required throughout the project by email.
19. The Project Board will also wish to have the opportunity to comment on any draft reports before they are finalised.
20. The project will be overseen by Peter Tinson, Executive Secretary of UCISA. Expert advice and input will be provided by representatives from BUFDG and AHUA.

### **Timescale**

21. It is intended that the contract for this study will be awarded to accommodate a start date week commencing 19 October 2009. The study will last for a maximum of sixteen weeks with the final report delivered by 8 February 2010, with a draft final report submitted one week prior to this date.

### **Funding Available**

22. **Up to £25,000** is available for the study. This funding includes any expenses but excludes applicable VAT. Bidders eligible to apply for full economics costs (fEC) are permitted to do so, but UCISA's total contribution to the project will not exceed £25,000 (excluding VAT).

### **Submission details**

23. The tender proposal should clearly identify:
  - relevant experience in similar projects/initiatives;
  - the proposed methodology/methodologies to be used;
  - a description of the envisaged final output;
  - a detailed work plan with milestones and deliverables;
  - a risk assessment for the activities proposed;
  - the basis on which the fee would be calculated, broken down into different phases as appropriate and showing the relevant daily rates against each member of the team to be employed on the project;
  - the staff to be used in the main areas of work and where management responsibility for the project will rest. A single point of contact for all correspondence relating to the project should be provided;
  - confirmation that work could start by the week commencing 19 October at the latest and be completed in the timescales specified;
  - full contact details for the project leader, including email address.
24. The proposal should be submitted via email only to [execsec@ucisa.ac.uk](mailto:execsec@ucisa.ac.uk) by **17.00 on 18 September 2009**.

25. Tenders must be no longer than 8 single sides of A4 (including any confidential annexes and cost breakdown) and should be typeset in Arial or a similar font at a minimum of 10-point size. **Any bids exceeding the eight page limit will be rejected prior to the evaluation stage.** CVs may be attached as appendices to the proposal but should be no longer than 2 sides of A4 each.
26. Proposals MUST be received by the deadline which will be strictly adhered to. Faxed or late proposals will NOT be accepted.
27. UCISA will endeavour to notify bidders of the outcome of the evaluation process by 2 October 2009. UCISA reserves the right not to award a contract.

### **Bidding Guidance**

28. A guide to bidding is included in Appendix B.

### **Evaluation Criteria for Bids**

29. Tenders will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria in no particular order:
  - a full understanding of the specification, including addressing the purpose and scope of the study as laid out in the terms of reference;
  - suitability of proposed methodology/methodologies;
  - clarity and feasibility of detailed workplan;
  - relevance of the previous experience of the tendering organisation(s) and of the particular consultants/researchers to the project;
  - analysis of risks to successful completion of the study;
  - value for money.

### **Terms and Conditions**

30. Terms and conditions are outlined in Appendix B.

### **Legal Requirements**

31. Any information that a bidder considers to be commercial in confidence will need to be put into a separate annex in the tender submission. UCISA may still be obliged to make this information available if challenged although as a membership organisation, UCISA is not subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. UCISA would never disclose any information during the actual tendering process, to avoid any prejudice to this process.
32. The contract for the work outlined in the above would be operated under the jurisdiction of UK law.

### **Further Information**

33. Enquiries about this invitation to tender should be addressed to Peter Tinson at the address below:

Peter Tinson  
Executive Secretary  
UCISA  
University of Oxford  
13 Banbury Road  
Oxford  
OX2 6NN

Tel: 01865 283425  
Email: [execsec@ucisa.ac.uk](mailto:execsec@ucisa.ac.uk)

## Appendix A

### Scenarios for DR costing

IT departments in HE have difficulty in placing a cost on failure. This is largely because, whilst the effects of downtime or malfunction may be severe, they cannot be translated simply into a reliable figure.

This proposal suggests that a mechanism is needed for indicating both the direct and indirect costs of IT failure, in a form which can be used when making a business case for resilience funding.

Direct costs can be measured in terms of loss of staff time, failure to recruit students, or loss of students as a result of poor course delivery.

Indirect costs focus on loss of reputation, and the consequential cost to the institution.

In order to produce a specific set of costs to the institution, it is suggested that a series of possible scenarios is examined, in order to show what level of financial detriment may be suffered in relation to key events.

In each case, it is assumed that the relevant IT systems are unavailable, or not functioning sufficiently well to deliver the required outcomes.

A set of sample scenarios are outlined below. A minimum of 8 and maximum of 12 scenarios will be defined for this project. The Project Board will meet with the successful contractor early in the process to define and prioritise the scenarios to be studied.

Incident	Description/ impact	Cost type	Length of downtime		
			One day	One week	One month
Failure during admissions	Student applications are invariably processed online in one form or another. Home undergraduate students would normally apply via UCAS but downtime may prevent decisions on applicants being transmitted (to UCAS) in a timely manner which may result in potential students heading elsewhere. There are a number of key decision dates when downtime is more critical. Some institutions have opted to use the UCAS postgraduate applications module UKPASS. However in the majority of cases students apply direct to the institution or department.	Direct			
		Indirect			
Failure during Clearing	The clearing process takes place in the week after the 'A' level results are released. Applications are made and decisions taken in a very short timeframe so downtime may result in potential students heading elsewhere.	Direct			N/A
		Indirect			N/A
Loss of VLE	A significant amount of teaching material is now held online in a virtual learning environment (VLE). The VLE is often used for submission of coursework and assessment.	Direct			
		Indirect			
Failure during enrolment	Most, if not all, institutions now rely on online systems to enrol their students. Prior to the enrolment process data relating to the students is transferred to a number of related systems and services to allow students access to resources such as IT and the Library.	Direct			
		Indirect			
Failure at results day(s)	Most courses will have a pre-determined date when they look to announce results. Downtime is more critical in the weeks coming up to results days as this is when calculations are performed relating to the students' grades and examination boards which verify the results sit.	Direct			
		Indirect			



Incident	Description/ impact	Cost type	Length of downtime		
			One day	One week	One month
Failure during HESA submission	One of the main uses of the HESA statistics on students is to determine the level of funding for the following year. The collection mechanism has a number of key dates for submission and validation of data. There are a number of HESA returns; some are more critical to an institution than others.	Direct			
		Indirect			

## Appendix B

### Guide to bidding

This guide to bidding for invitations to tender is aimed at individuals, organisations and institutions responding to a tender invitation for a specific piece of work, particularly for anyone unfamiliar with the process.

Anyone tendering should be familiar with and will be expected to comply with the terms and conditions outlined below. This guide has been designed to support you in preparing a bid in response to this invitation to tender. For a bid to be successful it must:

- Stand out from the others
- State its objectives clearly and concisely
- Describe how it meets the criteria set out in the tender and clarify outputs
- Demonstrate that an initial assessment of project risks has been undertaken
- Provide a sound initial project plan and demonstrate robust project management arrangements
- Document proposed dissemination, embedding and evaluation mechanisms
- Provide clear costings
- Demonstrate value for money or add significant value to the funding requested

### UCISA activities

The fundamental aims of UCISA are to:

- Identify and disseminate best practice in the promotion and use of information systems, services and technologies in UK higher and further education;
- Inform and support policy making processes, at an international, national and institutional level, relating to the cost effective application of information systems, services and technologies.

UCISA funds case studies, toolkits, preparation of guides and good practice as part of its activity to promote best practice. This work falls under the 'best practise' strand of activity.

### Evaluation Criteria

Winning bids always demonstrate that the author has read the invitation to tender thoroughly and carefully.

Bids will be evaluated against a set of criteria that are described in the invitation to tender. Read the tender thoroughly and carefully and check whether your bid meets these criteria. It can help to have an independent colleague carry out a check for you. Examples of evaluation criteria in invitations to tender, in no particular order, include:

- Evidence of understanding of the problem/issues
- Feasibility of approach/appropriateness of the methodology
- Feasibility and detail of the work plan/ timetable
- Project management
- Risk assessment and management
- Relevant experience, track record
- Value for money

Your bid will be marked by a panel of independent experts. They may not have much knowledge of your organisation and will have a number of proposals to grade. Your proposal must be clear, concise

and provide all of the information requested in the invitation to tender within the maximum number of pages stated. A well-written, brief summary of the methodology to be used that sets out the information in an easily understood form will be very helpful. A clear presentation of the information in your proposal is therefore the key to success.

### **Making the Case**

First and foremost your bid should be aligned with the requirements of the invitation to tender and demonstrate how the outputs requested will be delivered and the methodology to be used.

Your proposal should provide an outline project plan, with achievable milestones and deliverables. You should describe the team members, their experience and complementary roles and provide evidence that the project will be properly managed. Your bid should also include a considered indication of the risks that it may face and how these may be minimised.

The invitation to tender gives an indication of the maximum funding available. Do not hesitate to submit a bid for smaller amounts of funding if that is all that is justified based on the methodology proposed.

It is very important to provide a brief summary of all expenditure, justifying the amounts and the need and clarifying whether VAT is applicable. UCISA does not recover VAT. VAT should be charged at the applicable rate at the time of bidding; any increases to VAT will be honoured by UCISA.

All bids submitted by UK higher education institutions should use the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology in order to cost the activity. Bidders should then consider how they wish to price the activity (by considering the level of institutional contribution) in order to submit a competitive bid.

Other institutions and organisations submitting bids should use their usual costing and pricing practices but all costs should be clear and transparent, clarifying the price and number of days each individual working on the activity will provide, in order to assist the evaluators in determining the value for money of a proposal.

### **Legal Requirements**

UCISA as a membership body is not subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (2000). The contract for the work outlined in the ITT would be operated under the jurisdiction of UK law.

### **Checklist for Final Stages of Submitting a Bid**


Check the deadline and submission process - late copies of bids will not be accepted regardless of any extenuating circumstances.

Ensure you have collated the following information to accompany the main part of the bid:

- ensure the main body of the bid follows the font size and page limit guidance
- ensure the bid is submitted in the correct format and does not exceed the file size indicated
- include any commercial in confidence appendices (ONLY include commercial in confidence appendices unless otherwise stated in the invitation to tender)

### **Evaluation Process**

All bids received by UCISA are treated as confidential during the evaluation process and only shared with evaluation panel members, unless permission is obtained otherwise. Information created or received as a result of the bidding and evaluation process is not disclosed. Unsuccessful bids will be



destroyed by UCISA upon completion of the evaluation process. Successful bids may be published on the UCISA web site.

The UCISA Executive is responsible for leading the evaluation process. The Executive Secretary invites a subset of the Executive to undertake the evaluation. A number of experts in the community may also be invited to participate in the evaluation process to ensure an appropriate skills mix on the evaluation panel. In compiling the evaluation panel, the Executive will ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.

The identity of individual panel members is available upon request. However, in order to guard against inappropriate lobbying or influencing of panel members during the process this information will only be made available on request once the evaluation process is complete.

## Terms and Conditions of Funding

### Project Management

The project will be led by the contractor but overseen by the Executive Secretary, UCISA who will act as project executive. The contractor will be expected to develop a project initiation document to outline the approach and project plan. The project board will be formed from members of the UCISA Executive and representatives from BUFDG and AHUA. The contractor will be required to report regularly (fortnightly as a minimum) on progress to the Executive Secretary and may be required to present on their work to the UCISA Executive and/or Project Board.

The contractor must, as part of the management of the project, put in place appropriate formal quality assurance procedures to ensure that deliverables are fit for purpose and comply with specifications.

### Submission of Agreed Deliverables

The contractor must supply all deliverables specified in the agreed project proposal. The schedule for submitting deliverables must be included in the Project Plan and agreed with the Project Board. Any changes to this schedule must be agreed in writing with the UCISA Executive.

Project deliverables are subject to approval by the Project Board acting on behalf of the UCISA Executive.

Project deliverables will be forwarded to the UCISA Office via the Executive Secretary.

### Intellectual Property Rights

The intellectual property rights made, discovered, or created during the period of project funding will reside with UCISA.

The contractor and its partners must ensure that deliverables do not in any way infringe copyright or other intellectual property rights of any third party. For content creation projects, copyright and other intellectual property rights should be cleared before digitisation begins or cleared in stages as a managed part of the creation process. Rights need to be cleared for networked delivery of these resources in learning, teaching and research.

### Project Web Site

UCISA will create a web page on its website to explain the project aims and objectives and to disseminate information about project activities and results. The outputs from the study will be publicly and openly available.


### Publicity

The contractor should obtain clearance from the UCISA Office prior to releasing any publicity material or making public presentation about the project.

### Payment Schedule

The schedule of payments will be indicated in the formal contract.

Payment is conditional upon satisfactory progress with milestones and deliverables. The contractor must supply deliverables and core project documents on schedule or subsequent payments may be withheld.



At the end of the project, any unspent funds should be returned to UCISA unless a formal agreement is reached with the UCISA Executive about how these funds may be spent to further support the work of the project.

The core funding for the project has been provided by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). It is possible that HEFCE's auditors may wish to audit projects. Contractors are required to make themselves available for a visit by members of the UCISA Executive or nominees on reasonable notice.

### **Compliance with UK and EU legislation**

The contractor must comply with any UK or EU legislation or any international Treaty obligations currently in force or introduced during the timescale of the project that has implications for the conduct of projects or the deliverables/documents they supply.

#### ***Data Protection***

The contractor must accept responsibility as the data controller or Joint Data Controllers as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 ('the Act') for the personal data collected and processed as a result of this project. Neither UCISA nor the funding bodies accept responsibility for any breaches of the Act which occur due to the actions of project staff or agents directed by them.

In-line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, the contractor hereby grant UCISA permission to hold the names, job titles, and work contact details of project staff to enable administration of the programme that the project is part of and to keep project staff up to date with information pertinent to it.